

# United States: Trump Plans to Sabotage Elections in Bid to Retain Power

Wednesday 12 August 2020, by [SHEPPARD Barry](#) (Date first published: 12 August 2020).

**Trump and the Republicans are planning to sabotage the November election in order to throw it into chaos.**

They hope to use this to keep Trump in power and the Senate with a Republican majority.

They plan to do this by two campaigns. One is to undermine the post office to make counting of mail-in votes as difficult as possible. This will cause a delay in announcing the winner by days, weeks or longer. Trump has already stated that if there are such delays, he will not recognize the outcome if he loses.

A possible outcome will be court challenges by the Republicans and Democrats over the results. An article on the front page of the August 9 New York Times was titled "Long Legal Fight May Follow Vote on Election Day – Trump Lays Groundwork to Discredit Result – Biden Gets Ready."

The article refers to the disputed outcome in the 2000 presidential elections in Florida, where the Supreme Court intervened. In a divided vote, that intervention resulted in the election of George W. Bush as president over Al Gore. The Court's decision gave Bush enough votes in the Electoral College to put him one vote more than a majority in the College, although Gore won the popular vote.

The reader can unwind the violations of democratic voting inherent in the U.S. system in this mess.

"The stormy once-in a lifetime Florida recount battle that polarized the nation in 2000 and left the Supreme Court to decide the presidency may soon look like a high school student council election compared to what could be coming after this November's election," the article began.

"Imagine not just another Florida, but a dozen Floridas. Not just one set of lawsuits but a vast array of them. And instead of two restrained candidates staying out of sight and leaving the fight to surrogates, a sitting president of the United States unleashing ALL CAPS twitter blasts from the Oval Office while seeking ways to use the power of his office to intervene.

"The possibility of an ugly November – and perhaps even December and January – has emerged more starkly in recent days as President Trump complains that the election will be rigged and Democrats accuse him of trying to make that a self-fulfilling prophesy."

Trump's argument about "the most rigged election in history" centers on the unfounded charge that mail-in ballots will be corrupted in states with Democratic governors, while in states with Republican governors like Florida mail-in ballots will be counted honestly, he says.

It is true that it will take longer to count mail-in ballots than it would to count ballots cast in-person at voting sites. Expectations are that many more will use mail-in voting than in previous elections to

avoid exposure to the virus. So the counting will not be over on the evening of the November 3 election. Trump insists that the winner must be known that evening, setting the stage for him to reject the outcome if he is losing.

Even before the COVID crisis, the Postal Service was in deep financial crisis because of onerous laws put in place by both the Democrats and Republicans that forced the Service to put in escrow money to guarantee retirement funds for 75 years in the future, something no other government agency is remotely required to do.

The pandemic put even greater strains on the post office, as many people use the mail to obtain goods - including medicine — online that they normally would get from providers in person. In the recent negotiations between the Democrats and Republicans over new spending for the economy, the Republicans vetoed a Democratic proposal for \$25 billion for the post office to cover part of its additional expenditures resulting from the virus.

In May of this year, Trump appointed Louis DeJoy as Postmaster General to head the Postal Service. DeJoy was a major donor (\$1.2 million) to Trump's election campaign, and was in charge of fundraising for the Republican National Convention before his appointment. He and his wife hold as much as \$75 million in private competitors or contractors of the Postal Service.

Since taking office, DeJoy has instituted cost-cutting measures that have slowed down the delivery of the mail. There's now a days-long backlog of mail across the United States. This comes as Trump continues to claim that the post office can't handle the increase in mail-in ballots.

Recently, DeJoy disrupted Post Office functioning by reassigning or firing senior Postal Service executives, "the people who have to run the day-to-day operations of the post office," said Congressman Peter Defazio of Oregon.

"This is nothing less than Donald Trump and his political cronies trying to steal the election by blocking or delaying vote-by-mail. Trump has sued states to try and block vote-by-mail. That won't work. But he's going to try and stop the mail from being delivered. This is outrageous."

Speaking on Democracy Now, Mark Dimondstein, president of the American Postal Workers Union, said, "Anything, any policy that slows down the mail runs counter to everything a postal worker stands for. And we're completely opposed to these policies that are delaying mail...."

"We work under a law that says, 'prompt, reliable and efficient service'. 'Prompt' means quickly. So, obviously, it's a demoralizing thing to postal workers, who are out on the front lines of the pandemic as essential workers, connecting the country in these difficult and challenging times, to then be told to delay mail."

One of the cost-cutting measures DeJoy has implemented has been the banning over overtime. "Here we are in a COVID world. Forty thousand postal workers have been quarantined since March, over 2,500 sick," Dimondstein said. Overtime is necessary to plug these holes. So the lack of overtime further slows the mail.

Trump's immediate goal is to undermine mail-in voting. But there is a longer-range goal. Mark Dimondstein said, "On June 28, the Office of Management Budget of the White House put out, in writing, a proposal to break up the Postal Service and sell it to private corporations, for private profit."

"Whether people get postal service at all will then depend on who they are, where they live, and how much it will cost."

In addition to sabotaging the Postal Service, the second way the Trump forces will influence the election is voter suppression.

The heart of the 1965 Voting Rights Act was struck down in 2013 by the Supreme Court Republican majority in a five to four decision, written by Chief Justice John Roberts. What was struck down was the provisions that states that had a history of suppressing Black voters in the Jim Crow era had to have federal approval before enacting any new voting rights laws. Since then, Republican-controlled states in the Jim Crow South and elsewhere have enacted many restrictions upheld by the Supreme Court aimed at Black voters, using various subterfuges reminiscent of Jim Crow laws and arbitrary rulings.

An article in the New York Times pointed out the 2013 ruling “prompted many states controlled by Republicans to enact voter ID laws, roll back early voting and purge voter registration lists.”

An example of an arbitrary ruling was to drastically reduce voting stations in predominately Black communities in Georgia in the 2018 elections. This was upheld by the Supreme Court after being challenged.

Since April, the Court has issued four more rulings in cases from Alabama, Florida, Texas and Wisconsin that restricted mail-in votes, affecting Black and Latino voters disproportionately.

In April, the Court majority ruled that a federal judge should not have extended the deadline for some mail-in voting in light of the coronavirus pandemic. In a dissenting opinion, Justice Ruth Bader Goldberg wrote that “the court’s order, I fear, will result in massive disenfranchisement.”

She said the majority had put voters in an unacceptable choice. “Either they will have to brave the polls, endangering their and others’ safety, or they will lose the right to vote, through no fault of their own.”

In July, the Court blocked a trial judge’s order that would have made it easier to use mail-in ballots in an Alabama primary election. In another ruling, the Court declined to reinstate a trial judge’s ruling that would have allowed all Texas voters - not just those 65 or older - to submit their ballots by mail given the health crisis.

In 2018, voters in Florida by referendum extended the right to vote for felons after they serve their sentences (Florida had previously denied them the right to vote for the rest of their lives). The Republican controlled government then passed a law that said that such ex-felons had to first pay back earlier court fines and fees with interest before they could vote, which effectively denied them the right to vote.

The Supreme Court ruled that Florida could do that. Since Blacks and Latinos are the large majority of those imprisoned under the program of mass incarceration in the United States, they are the most affected.

If it turns out that in spite of Trump’s efforts to suppress minority votes and sabotage of mail-in voting, he is declared the loser it remains to be seen how or if he will carry out his threats not to accept that outcome, and what that will mean.

But it is certain that we can face grave danger to bourgeois democracy, however weak it already is in the United States.

**Barry Sheppard**

